Friends of the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke
Newsletter Number Thirteen
May 2004

Our Third Annual General Meeting
held at the Six Bells Public House, Fulbourn
April 8th 2004

Present. Committee:
John Ady, Sam Agnew, Naomi Brookes, James Fisher, Julia Napier and 45 members of the Society.

Apologies were received from Jane Fenton, Robert Finch, Rob Mungovan, David Seilly and Iain Webb.

Proceedings. Our Chairman, Sam Agnew, said that the Friends had continued to contribute to the conservation management of the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke, and to take part in the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke Project Group. This has provided an opportunity for all the interested parties to meet in order to consider funding, visit the sites, and agree on the management plans. With regard to the committee of the Friends of the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke, Sam reported that unfortunately Robert Finch had had to resign from the committee because of ill health. Jane Fenton has found herself too busy to attend committee meetings regularly, but she has very kindly agreed to help with future applications for grants. The committee would like to take this opportunity to thank Robert Finch and Jane Fenton for their help in establishing the Friends. We are particularly grateful to Jane for nobly offering to be our first Treasurer and for organising our first applications for grants from Awards for All and the Lottery Heritage Initiative.

Local Heritage *initiative*

Report by Naomi Brookes,
Green Belt Project Manager

Heritage Lottery Fund Nationwide The Countryside Agency

Naomi reported that the appearance of Fleam Dyke had changed dramatically during the last year, with extensive clearance of both sides of the bank between the Disused Railway and Fulbourn. Our Awards for All grant of £5,000 paid for the top of the bank to be cleared for 2 - 3 metres on either side in 2003, and with funds from the Cambridgeshire Archaeological Field Service, the north-east bank was cleared during the winter of 2004. The clearance of the ditch, which was paid for by English Nature, will make management of the site much easier. In September 2003, the arrival of sheep on the dyke after more than 50 years was a cause for celebration.

However, plans to bring them back in April to graze Section 7 (between Mutlow Hill and the Disused Railway) announced at the AGM, were suspended when Ted Clover, the Grazier, reported his fear that the sheep would become entangled in the brambles which form part of the hedges. It is hoped that electric fencing will solve this problem, and the sheep will be brought back later in the summer. The highlight of 2003 was the finding by Iain Webb of 8 new Juniper seedlings , as reported in the November newsletter.

On the Roman Road, work paid for by the LHI grant began in February, with the clearance of scrub along selected sections of the Road between Worsted Lodge and the Balsham-Hildersham Road. The overgrown hedge will be taken back in stages, allowing the existing flora to seed and spread into the newly cleared areas. Between Worsted Lodge and Copley Hill, hedges have been lowered in height and expertly laid by Don Davies. This work

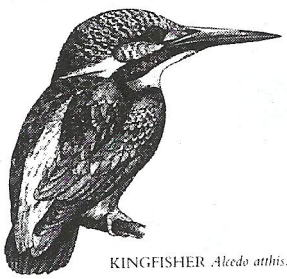
was paid for by the Wildlife Enhancement Scheme, an English Nature grant to land owners. The Mid-Week Conservation Volunteers have worked regularly on both sites and there were three Sunday work parties when 10 to 15 Friends have turned out to clear scrub, mow and rake up.

Accounts

John Ady summarised the accounts which he had prepared, and which had been audited for us by Roger Clarke. He explained that income from members covered the office costs of the Friends, leaving a small surplus which in November 2003 was used to bridge the gap between our £5,000 grant from Awards for All and the final cost of the clearance work. John praised the achievements of the society so far and and expressed his pleasure in seeing the work done. He thanked Roger Clarke for auditing our accounts free of charge, before announcing that he would no longer be able to serve on the committee.

Re-election of the Committee

You will not be surprised to know that Sam's offer to resign was rejected. Julia's proposal that he should continue was seconded by Mike Albutt. Sam then thanked John Ady for all his work on the accounts and on the forthcoming information leaflet on the Roman Road. Fortunately, Mike Albutt was prepared to take on the job of Treasurer and this was approved by the meeting. Mike joined the Friends early on, and is a regular helper on work parties. He is the Managing Director of Cambridge Electronic Design, the company he founded. Sam then proposed the election to the committee of a recently retired businessman and farmer, Nigel Copeman. This was seconded by Richard Townley of Fulbourn Manor. The remaining members of the committee were re-elected without more ado, and the meeting broke for coffee and talk, payment of subscriptions and some useful net-working. After the break, there were illustrated talks about two very exciting wetland restoration projects. I think it is fair to say that everyone there was inspired and encouraged by these reports on what can be achieved and the concept that wildlife enhancement schemes such as these are an essential part of the future of Cambridgeshire.
Julia Napier



KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis: ET*

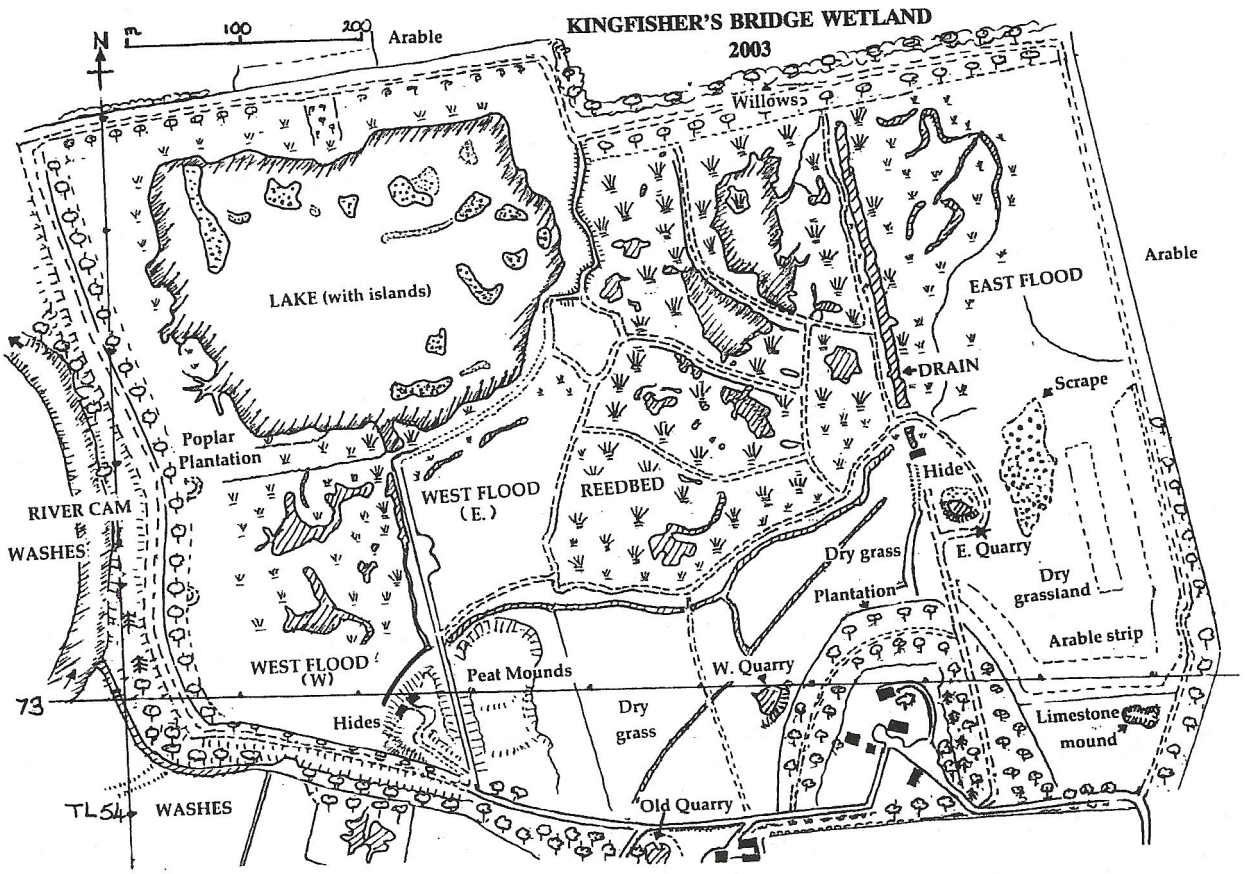
Kingfisher's Bridge, Wetland Creation Project

Summary of the introduction by Stephen Tomkins, Director of Studies in Biological Sciences and Fellow of Homerton College

This remarkable fenland restoration scheme is less than ten years old. In the early 1990's, Andrew Green, Managing Director of Green's of Soham, decided to return 65 hectares or 160 acres of farmland to nature. Eric Ennion's book "Adventurer's Fen" was the inspiration for this scheme, in addition to a visit from Peter Scott who had urged Andrew Green to 'develop a wetland'. Roger Beecroft, a wildlife consultant, was invited to do a feasibility study, plans were made and in 1995 a digger was brought in to transform what had been a large field of sugar beet into a lakes of varying depth with inter-connecting channels and raised mounds that would become islands. One huge pile of peat was sold for gardens, probably the only wildlife-friendly peat sale on record, and the other became the hill which conceals two turf-roofed hides. From the hides, the view of the wetland reserve and the surrounding fields culminates in the magnificent southern facade of Ely Cathedral. In less than ten years, the combined drive, enterprise and expert knowledge of Andrew Green and Roger Beecroft together have resulted in a wetland of SSSI quality. The mere and reed beds have attracted numerous wildfowl and the range of wildflowers has become increasingly interesting, with one particular success. See below. In short, Kingfisher's Bridge is a remarkably interesting private reserve, which also demonstrates what can be done by individuals with energy and determination, some seed corn money and grants from the various wildlife restoration funds which are now available. Stephen Tomkins then suggested that the Friends should think big and begin to dream of a chalk grassland reserve.With a cry of 'Bring Back the Great Bustard, symbol of Cambridgeshire,' Stephen handed over to Roger Beecroft!

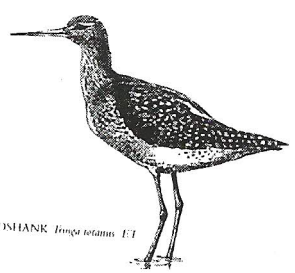
The Creation of Kingfisher's Bridge Wetland Reserve

Summary of an illustrated talk by Roger Beecroft, Wildlife Consultant



The basis of any wetland scheme is a managed water supply. Here clay bunds (water retaining banks) were created to hold the water where it was needed, with a pattern of channels and sluices which conduct water through the site as needed. The main lake or mere is 7.0 hectares, or 17 acres, of permanent water. It contains 12 islands, some of which only emerge in summer, providing a variety of bare surfaces, shingle beaches and islands with protective vegetation. The reed bed, at 9.4 ha (23 acres), is half the recommended size for reed bed creation schemes aimed at Bitterns, but the rich feeding provided by the reserve fully compensates for that. Roger described with amusement how his careful planting and nurturing of the first reeds seemed ludicrous after the grazing wildfowl in the first winter spread fragments of reed effortlessly over the designated area, producing within two years a hearty reed bed. Obviously, a good bird reserve is like a quality restaurant for foxes, so it was decided to fence the whole site and keep the foxes out before Kingfisher's Bridge became part of their dinner routine. Monitoring of birds started in March 1996 and has continued since then. Wildfowl numbers have increased five-fold and between March 1996 and March 2003, 167 species of bird were recorded, including 3 Marsh Harriers and a Great Bittern, which was heard booming in the spring of 2003 and a young bird seen in the summer.

An aspect of Roger Beecroft's talk which was of particular interest was his account of the variety of techniques used to attract and provide for wildlife of all kinds. Obviously a wetland bird reserve needs an abundance of fish and eels, so the fish stocks are managed to provide the different types of fishy food. £150 will buy you a kilo of elvers from the River Severn! A year-old eel is just the right snack size for a Bittern. In addition, potatoes are put out in winter to feed over-wintering geese.


REDSHANK *Tringa totanus* ET

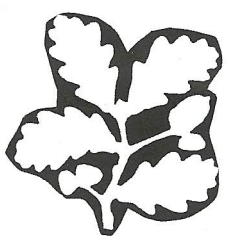
One of the features of this site is that the land rises slightly towards a small limestone cliff and an area of dry grassland. Lovely! Sand Martins! Well, no. Limestone is too hard, so holes have been drilled in the cliff, and a water jet used to make the turning circle that the Sand Martins need. A concrete bat tunnel is being established this year. Black-headed gulls have been arriving in large numbers, taking up all available space with 400 nests, so when the Common Terns come, there is no bare ground left. The ingenious solution is to keep the water levels high until the gulls have built their nests, and then drop the water level to provide happy homes for terns. A mobile, amphibious, solar-powered pump devised by Roger Beecroft helps to keep a hectare of wetland topped up with water for fledgling waders.

The reserve contains 13.6 ha (34 acres) of seasonally wet grassland, and 8.4 ha (21 acres) of dry grassland both of which are grazed by a flock of the little black Hebridean sheep. Introductions of plants have not been very successful. For example, the rare Fen Ragwort was introduced to the site but only one plant grew. By contrast, new species are brought in by the water flowing through the reserve and birds bring seeds on their feet, just as they do in gardens. However, the plant success story of the reserve is Water Germander, *Teucrium scordium*. The pond near Andrew Green's house was known for a small colony of this rare plant. Cuttings were taken, propagated and planted hopefully in various parts of the wetland. By 2003 it was calculated that the reserve had at least 50,000 plants of this pale pink, scented labiate.

Roger Beecroft ended his talk by saying that when the reserve was named, there were, in fact, no Kingfishers at Kingfisher's Bridge. There are now two pairs breeding on the site, both pairs profiting from the holes drilled in the cliffs for the sand martins!

Roger Beecroft has very kindly invited us to visit the reserve. See back page for details.

Wicken Fen – turning the desert into an oasis



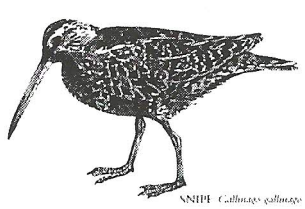
by Adrian Colston, Property Manager, Wicken Fen

Wicken Fen, which is one of Britain's oldest nature reserves, celebrated its100th anniversary in1999. At 324ha (800 acres), Wicken Fen is the third largest reserve in Cambridgeshire. Nonetheless, it represents only a tiny fragment (0.08%) of the thousands of square kilometres of fenland that existed before the great drainage projects of the 17th century.

Wicken Fen was established as a nature reserve because of the diversity of its invertebrates, and has also long been associated with studies of natural history and ecological research. The Fen has been managed traditionally for centuries by sedge cutting and peat digging. This management has produced a unique fenland habitat rich in wildlife particularly invertebrates.

Extinctions on a pocket handkerchief

It has become clear from the theory of Island Biogeography that small nature reserves will suffer from the local extinction of species however well managed they are. MacArthur and Wilson showed that the number of breeding species on islands tends to stabilise at a level related to rates of immigration and extinction. These are controlled by isolation and island size: large islands close to a continental source tend to have more species than small isolated islands. Subsequently, conservation biologists extended this idea to terrestrial habitats and isolated habitat fragments, and then to strategic questions about the selection of nature reserves. It was argued that reserves should be as large as possible, and if small that they should be close together and connected by corridors of similar habitat. There is also growing interest in the connectivity of landscapes and in the extent to which landscape elements are linked to each other in a way that allows populations to interact and re-colonise following local extinction.



In the UK context, debate about reserve size has seemed somewhat academic. Reserve purchase has tended to be driven by threat of destruction and availability of funds, and the isolation of reserves is something that conservationists have become used to. However, the theory of Island Biogeography, along with the law of diminishing returns, have sadly now exposed this approach to nature conservation as unsustainable. Wildlife sites and nature reserves are too often viewed in isolation and not as part of a wider landscape or ecosystem.

It was recognised in the 1990s that in order to secure the future of East Anglia's fenland flora and fauna, and to make the re-establishment of lost species viable, it would be necessary to think beyond the bounds of the existing tiny fragments of wetland. The possibility of creating large artificial wetlands of great conservation value can be created is long established in the fens.

Putting wildlife back on the map

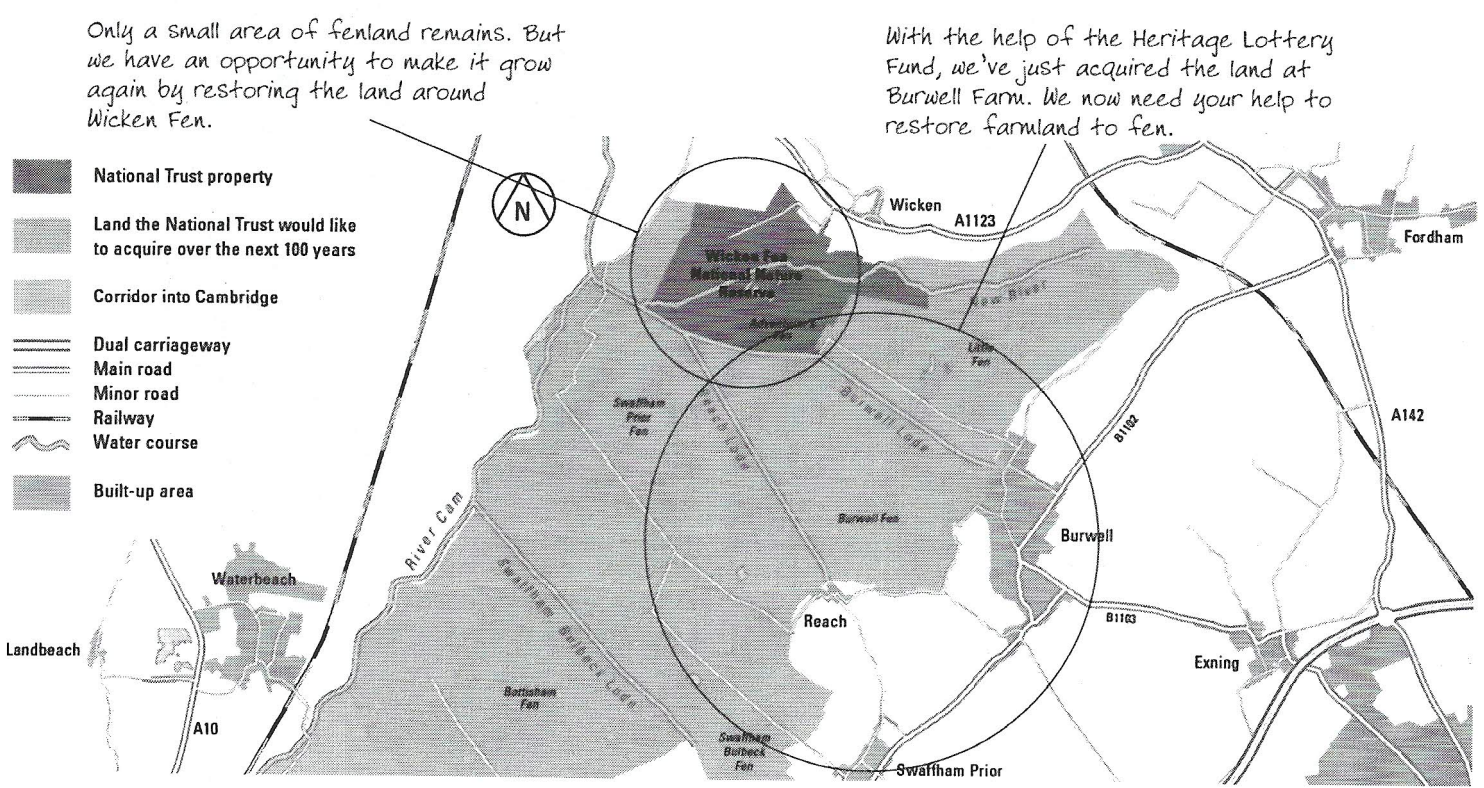
In the late 1990s, the National Trust identified the desirability and feasibility of extending the boundaries of Wicken Fen. This would make it possible to maintain populations of fen flora and fauna over a wider area, and allowing the area of peat, which is the Fenland's most precious resource, to begin to grow after three centuries of loss. It was concluded that the 3,700 hectares (9,143 acres) of farmland to the south and east of Wicken Fen, formerly known as Swaffham and Burwell Fens, was topographically, geologically and hydrologically suitable for reclamation as fen. The Trust proposed, therefore, to acquire up to 3700 ha. of farmland to the south of Wicken Fen over the next 100 years. This area includes most of the catchment supplying water to Wicken Fen.

Much of the project involves the acquisition of land. The Trust has contacted all the landowners in the project area informing them of our ideas, and we have met over 70 in person. Although management agreements with local landowners are an option, it is considered that these are likely to be rare. At the moment, Countryside Stewardship agreements from DEFRA are available to farmers to revert arable land to wetland. To date, only the National Trust has taken up this option in this area.

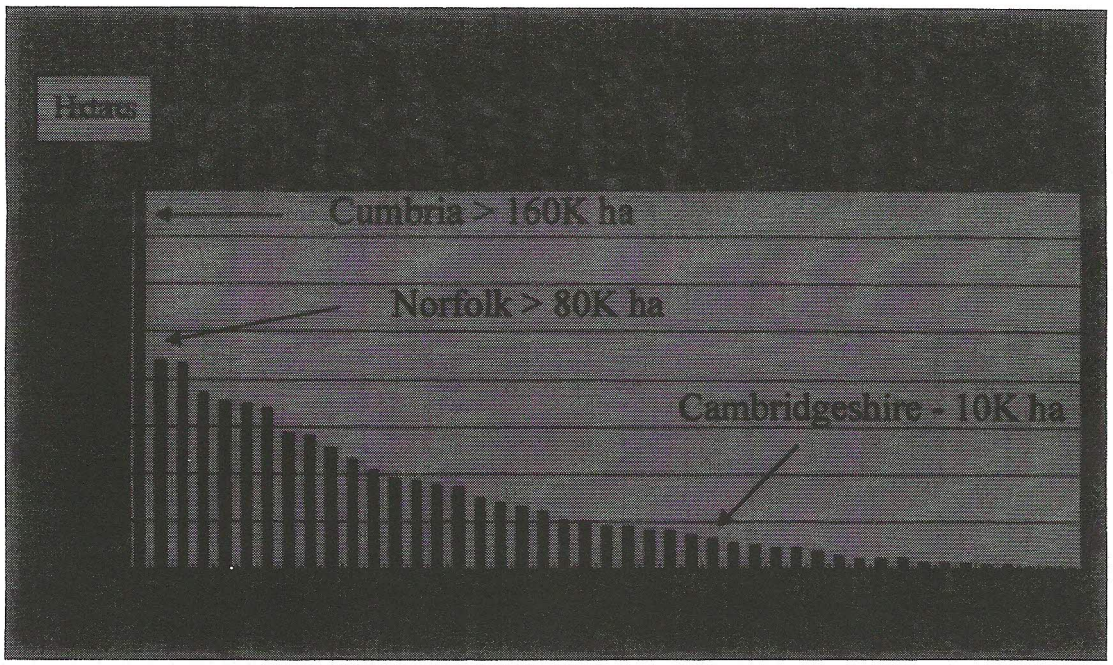
Buying pieces of the jig-saw puzzle

As a result of media coverage the National Trust has been approached by a number of landowners who are willing to sell their land to assist with the project. The first area of land, Guinea Hall Farm, (47 hectares or 116 acres) was acquired in October 2000. This lies immediately adjacent to the east of the existing reserve . A second purchase of 168 hectares (405 acres) of Burwell Fen Farm was acquired in October 2001 for £1.7 million, including a grant of £933,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund and donations of £736,000 from the public.

In 2004 we were awarded £800,000 by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for additional land purchases Further acquisitions are anticipated during 2004/5. For more information on the project, visit the Fen's website at www.wicken.org.uk and look under 100 Year Vision



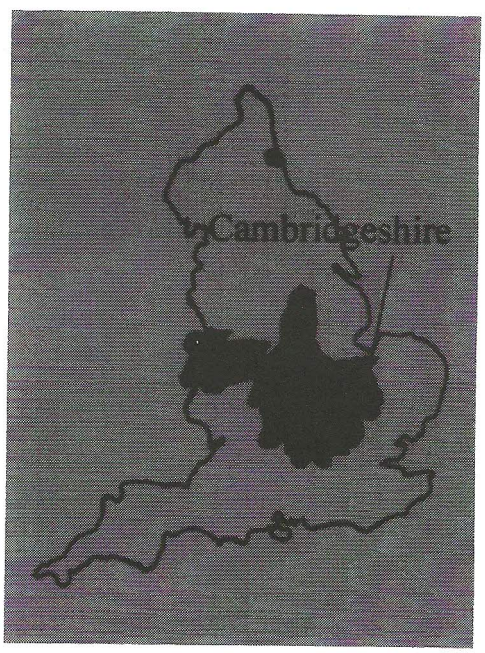
Putting Cambridgeshire in a national wildlife context



Cambridgeshire ranks very poorly with respect to other counties in England

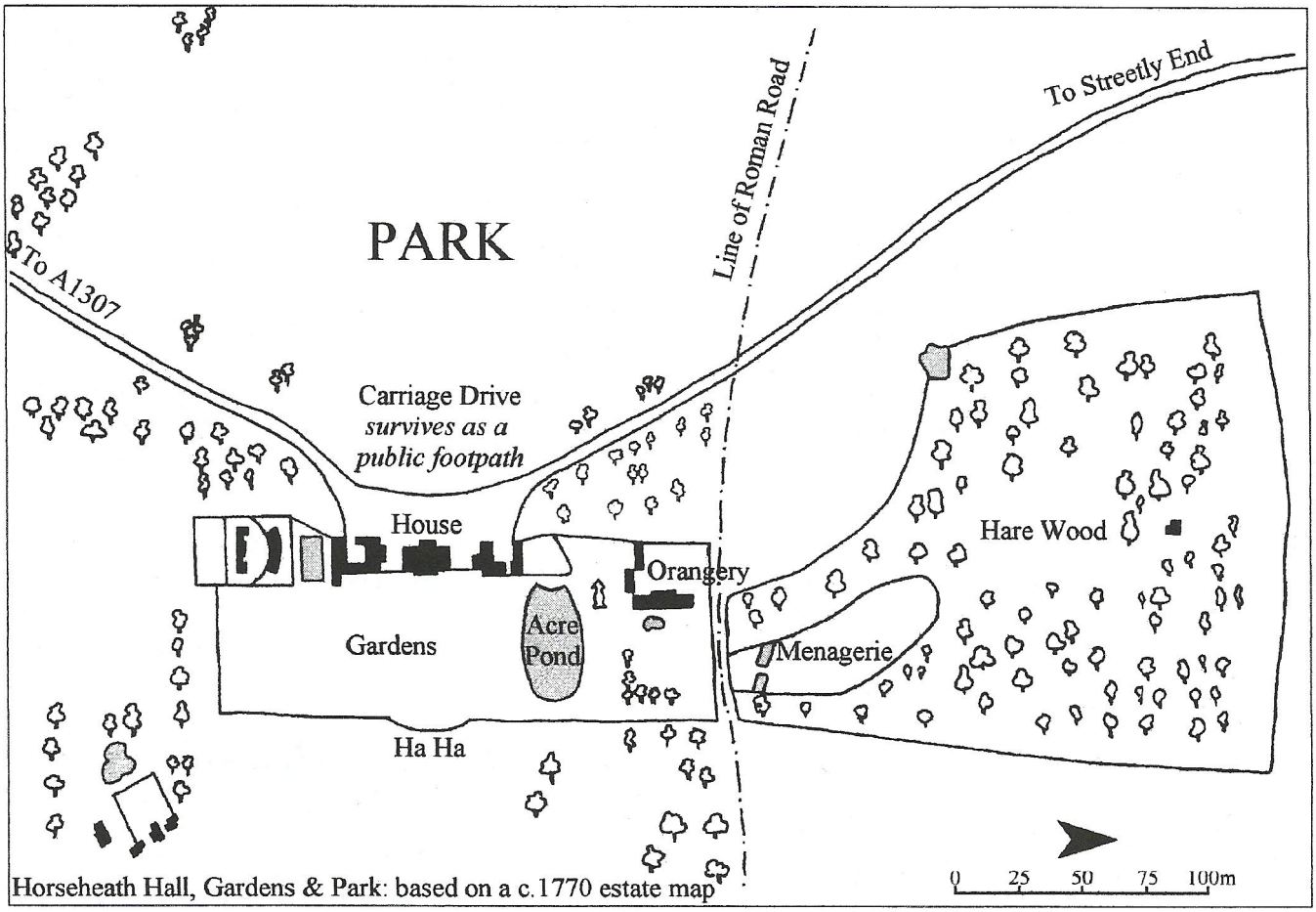
The Black Hole

- Counties with less than 1/2 the average of nationally important wildlife habitat
- National conservation policies and funding have largely ignored the Black Hole
- No National Parks, Environmentally Sensitive Areas, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heritage Coasts etc.



BUT lots of people live in the Black Hole and deserve access to a countryside rich in wildlife

THE RISE AND FALL OF HORSEHEATH HALL
by Janet Morris



Horseheath Hall, Gardens & Park: based on a c.1770 estate map

In her first article on Horseheath Hall, in Newsletter 12, Janet Morris described how in 1663. William, 3rd Lord Alington, commissioned the gentleman-architect, Roger Pratt, to build a new house to replace the old hall. It was built in the middle of the mediaeval deer park, separated from the village and elevated above the surrounding landscape. In red brick, with white Ketton stonework, it was constructed in the 'double-pile' mode, i.e. two rooms deep, as opposed to the single room depth of mediaeval and Tudor houses. The servants were relegated to the semi-basement, beginning the Upstairs-Downstairs tradition of country house life. The gardens were laid out in the latest fashion. Sir William died in 1684, leaving the estate to his young son, Giles. It was initially leased to John Bromley, a sugar planter from Barbados, and subsequently sold to him following the death of Giles in 1691. Julia Napier

Part 2 'Levelling to the ground'

From the start of their ownership the Bromley family spent their fortune lavishly on Horseheath Hall. The most distinguished member of the family was probably Henry, grandson of the John who had bought the Hall at the end of the 17th century. He succeeded to the estate in 1718, served as both MP for the county and Lord Lieutenant and was created 1st Baron Montfort by George II in 1741. About 1733, Henry employed the very fashionable designer, William Kent, to remodel the interior of the house along with the gardens and park.

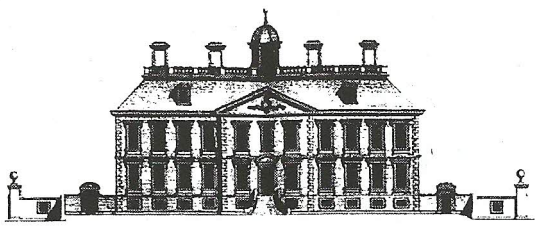
Henry, himself, was something of an art connoisseur. He collected romantic landscape paintings like those of Claude Lorraine and it was this style, with its many classical allusions, that Kent was trying to recreate with his garden designs. Formal avenues of trees were felled or converted to picturesque 'clumps' and it was probably at this time that the old walled gardens to the east of the house were replaced by lawn divided more naturally from the park (and the grazing deer and cattle) by a ha-ha. Kent introduced statuary and large potted plants to the

gardens and had an oval pond constructed, rather a trademark of his. This was known as the Acre Pond, from its size, and had a grotto. A particularly favourite tree was the Cedar of Lebanon - an exotic species in the 18th century - and its nice to think that the two that remain on the site today may well have been planted by him. Henry put in a new carriage drive, the line of which survives today as the public footpath, and donated a pair of gates to Trinity College (which can still be seen at the Backs entrance), so these may have formed part or be the result of the general landscaping scheme as well.

Unfortunately, Henry not only liked to spend his money extravagantly but he also enjoyed gambling as well. Gradually, parts of the Horseheath estate were sold off to settle his debts; but this was seemingly not sufficient for, on New Year's Day 1755, he committed suicide. His friend, the antiquary William Cole, described him as a man of integrity and honour. Henry was succeeded by his son, Thomas, a young man who also lived well above his means and who, too, liked to gamble. He gave a renowned Ball each year at Horseheath to which some 300 people were invited and he greatly enjoyed his role as colonel in the Cambridgeshire Militia. He continued with improvements to the Hall adding an orangery, which cost £1,300 and contained 150 orange trees costing one guinea each, and building a menagerie in Hare Wood for exotic birds and, reputedly, monkeys. However, this degree of spending could not be sustained. He borrowed heavily and mortgaged the estate until he inevitably ran out of credit.

In 1775, the contents of the wine cellar, plants and shrubs, the potted plants and orange trees, the caged birds, a pack of hounds and kitchen equipment were all offered for sale. The Hall and estate were advertised, first for let but then for sale as well. Failing a buyer for the whole, the next to go were the fittings of the Hall - ornamental stonework, marble chimney-pieces, floorboards and doors - along with iron gates, railings, paving and statuary from the garden and park.

In 1783, Henry Batson eventually took over the mortgage and paid it off by selling timber from the estate. In the late 1790s, the rest of the house was sold for building materials and it was then that Charles Vancouver, undertaking a survey of agriculture in the county, noted the sad site of the Hall as it was 'levelling with the ground'.



Horseheath Hall c 1725 from Colen Campbell's *Vitruvious Britannicus*

In 1803, the Horseheath estate descended to Stanlake Batson who chose to build himself a new house, Horseheath Lodge, on the other side of the village (south of the Roman Road at Mark's Grave, now the home of Sir Arthur Marshall). He used the remaining bricks from the Hall for foundations, cellars and garden walls. Bricks and stones from the Hall had also found their way into many houses and gardens in Horseheath and surrounding villages - some can still be found there today. Apart from the gates to Trinity College, others from the sale can be seen at the nearby entrance to St John's College, and at Glebe House in Cheveley. The large copper ball, which topped the cupola on the Hall and had been brought back by a member of the Alington family from the Siege of Boulogne in 1544, is now many miles away on display inside the church at Naseby in Northamptonshire. The old park land was turned into farmland and is now part of the Streetly Hall estate. The actual site of the house and garden is a wildlife refuge and is not accessible to the public. However, you can stand on the public footpath in front of what was once the main entrance to Horseheath Hall and, as you stop and admire the view, perhaps, just perhaps, you may imagine you can smell orange blossom in the air and hear the ghostly rumble of carriages as they approach from Streetly End and cross the Roman Road bringing laughing revellers to Lord Montfort's famous Ball!

Further reading

Wayne Cockroft "Horseheath Hall, Cambridgeshire - a 'lost' garden landscape" *Patterns of the Past* P Pattison, D Field, S Ainsworth (eds) Oxbow 1999

W M Palmer *William Cole of Milton* , Galloway & Porter, Cambridge 1935

Catherine E Parsons 'Horseheath Hall and its owners' *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society* , XLI 1948 pp1-50

Events and Activities June - August 2004

Fulbourn Windmill Society has monthly working parties.
If you are interested in helping to restore the mill, contact Colin Wood on 01223 880067

Working Party Dates

Saturday 5th June	Sunday 18th July
Saturday 14th August	Sunday 12th September

Open Days from 2.0pm until 5.0pm. Entrance £2 per head. Under 5's and OAP's £1

Saturday 12th June	Sunday 11th July
Saturday 21st August	

Saturday 12th June and Sunday 13th June, 11am to 4pm

The Natural History Society of Cambridge Annual Public Exhibition will be held in the **Elementary Laboratory of CU Zoology Department, Downing Street, Cambridge**
There will be displays about many aspects of wildlife. Local enthusiasts will be there to fire you with enthusiasm for bats, bees, butterflies and moths,dragonflies, newts and toads, mushrooms etc. Local wildlife groups such as the Green Belt Project, the Cam Valley Project and the Friends of the Roman Road will be represented, along with St Ivo's School from St Ives with their menagerie of snakes, skinks, hamsters and assorted outsize tropical insects. Entrance is free. Tea and home-made biscuits are a speciality.

Wednesday 16th June **Celebrate National Insect Day on the Devil's Dyke!**
Iain Webb and Naomi Brookes of the Green Belt Project will combine with James Fisher of the Devil's Dyke Project to look at insects on the Devil's Dyke and Fleam Dyke. Meet at 10am by the Devil's Dyke at the car park of the July Racecourse, Newmarket, which is off the roundabout with the statue of a race horse and stable lad on the A1304. We will be looking at butterflies: the Brown Argus, the Dingy Skipper and the Green Hairstreak, plus beetles, snails and other invertebrates.

Thursday 17th June James Fisher invites you to help count **Fragrant Orchids** on the Devil's Dyke. Meet at 7pm at the Burwell Road car park on the B1102 between Swaffham Prior and Burwell. This will also be an opportunity to see some of the clearance work that has taken place during the past 2 years.

Sunday 4th July 1.30pm Iain Webb will be leading a **Walk** along part of the **Roman Road** to see the chalk grassland flowers and explain the purpose of the recent clearance work. Details to be announced. Ring Iain on 01954 713531 or on 07734 478461 to reserve a place

Sunday 11th July, 2.0pm **Butterfly Day at Over County Wildlife Site**, the Second Best Butterfly site in Cambridgeshire, due to be bulldozed to make way for the Guided Bus. On a sunny day there will be 15 species of butterfly on the wing, including Marbled Whites nectaring on the flower-covered banks. Meet by the Over Windmill, (TL 382 688) but please park safely on the verges further away where you can see what is coming. Trevor Grange, the Voluntary Warden and Peter Moule, the Assistant Warden, whose hard work over 15 years has largely created this reserve, will show us round. Nothing to do with the Roman Road, Fleam Dyke or the Devil's Dyke, but the flowers and butterflies are a sight for sore eyes, especially mine! Julia

Sunday 25th July. **Flora Monitoring Day** on Devil's Dyke. Quadrat surveys of vegetation, to compare newly cleared areas with areas cleared 3 years ago. All welcome, beginners or experts, but please ring James Fisher to book a place: tel: 01954 713532 Fax: 01954 710051

Sunday 15th August, 10.30 - 12.30 or so. **Friends' Visit to the Kingfisher's Bridge Reserve.** Roger Beecroft will meet us and take us round. No charge, but donations would be welcome. (Suggest £2 50 minimum) Sheila Roberts has kindly agreed to co-ordinate this event. Please contact her on 01223 880738 or e-mail gandsroberts@aol.com if you need a lift or could offer a lift. Directions for Kingfisher's Bridge. From Stretham take the A1123 towards Wicken. Go Over the Great Ouse then the Cam and past the limestone works. Then take the first left (opposite the turning to Upware), follow this road until you go over 2 speed bumps then turn left. Park on the grass track.

Friends' Pub Lunch at Wicken? If you would like to join up for lunch, could you contact Sheila, as it would be better to book a table/tables on a Sunday. We could go on to Wicken Fen to enjoy the wonderful Dragonflies there. Several Friends are dragonfly enthusiasts, so we could have our own guide if no one from the Dragonfly Project is available.

Field Bindweed Needed!

A request from Sharon Hearle,

the Eastern Region Officer for Butterfly Conservation

Butterfly Conservation, the butterfly equivalent of the RSPB, has identified many species of moth and some butterflies which need protection measures to ensure their survival in Britain. An essential preliminary to conservation work is knowledge of the needs of each species, which are hugely various. One of these is a pretty, pied noctuid, the **Four Spotted,** *Tyta luctuosa* which came to John Dawson's moth trap on the Fleam Dyke on 18th July 2003. John also found it in his moth trap in Fulbourn village on 23 July 1997, and at Lodge Farm, Fulbourn on 15th June 2002. John does a very great deal of moth trapping, so 3 records in 6 years is not encouraging. The only previous record for Cambridgeshire is from 1977. Three relatively recent sightings suggest the presence of a local colony. Can we find more proof? A way of getting information is to search the known food plants for caterpillars. We may be able to locate colonies of the Four Spotted in this way? (A good pair of eyes helps. Richard Fowling, a local naturalist and a regular on Work Parties was bicycling along a country lane near Littlebury on the Essex border when he spotted 6 Four Spotted moths (sorry) flying about, and stopped to investigate. He has only just bought Paul Waring's moth book, and did not then know that they were rare, whereas the Essex moth enthusiasts have been hunting for this site for some time!)

The adult insect has two generations, the first in May and June, the second in late July and August. They are active during sunny days, basking and nectaring at flowers, particularly the flower heads of Oxeye Daisy. At night, they can be attracted to light. The larval food plant is Field Bindweed, which is fairly common in field margins in the County, but the species prefers dense patches growing on south facing embanked surfaces such as railways and ditches. Therefore, the Fleam Dyke would seem a prime candidate. If you see a good quantity of the pink and white Field Bindweed growing there, or anywhere else in the county, can you send your observations to Sharon Hearle: shearle@butterfly-conservation.org

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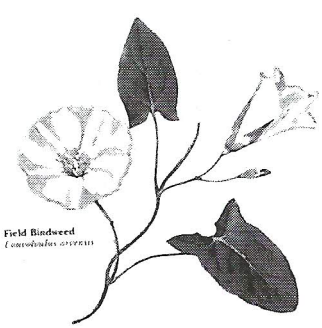

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